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ABSTRACT

The guide lists behaviors and skills needed by persons who work as teachers with very young handicapped children and their families. It is explained that ratings may be completed by self, peer, or supervisor. Skills are listed in 11 areas: referral, intake, and screening; determining child placement; interdisciplinary assessment; interdisciplinary setting; planning the individualized developmental plan; developing teaching skills in parents (caretakers); individualizing instruction; managing child progress data; consulting; staff development; and generic skills. Methods for determining training needs based on results of the guide are described. (CL)

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SKILLS INVENTORY FOR TEACHERS
(SIFT)

BY CORINNE W. GARLAND

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Patricia Miller who began us on the long road toward systematic assessment of staff having needs and from whose Competency Development Scales some items have been drawn.

Technical Assistance Development Systems (TADS) which assisted by providing us with the expertise of external reviewers.

Marsha Shearer who, in her review and critique, shared with us her understanding of the complex role of the home-based teacher and added immeasurably to the content and clarity of the Skills Inventory for Teachers.

SKILLS INVENTORY FOR TEACHERS (SIFT)

Introduction

SIFT was developed to assess the needs for staff development activities and to evaluate effectiveness of those activities within a home-based program serving handicapped infants and their families. SIFT is designed for use in a transdisciplinary approach to services in which the role of teacher is played by any one of a number of professionals including special educator, speech pathologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, nurse, social worker or by trained paraprofessionals. Therefore skills included in the inventory are those needed by persons who work as teachers with very young handicapped children and their families. The inventory addresses observable behaviors rather than knowledge or information possessed which will need to be measured in other ways. Neither does SIFT include skills specific to therapies or other health care professions.

SIFT is designed for four purposes:

1. To provide teachers with a list of behaviors and skills which are needed to ensure comprehensive quality services to young handicapped children.

2. To provide teachers and/or their supervisors and peers with an objective system for assessing the skills they possess and the degree to which they demonstrate necessary behaviors.

3. To proivde a system for planning individual or group staff development based on objectively assessed needs of staff members.

4. To specify, for personnel decision makers, the skills needed by persons providing direct services to young handicapped children.

Directions for Use

1. Ratings may be completed by:

   a. self
   b. peer
   c. supervisor

2. For each rating period, the rater (self, peer, or supervisor) should assess skills over several observations.

3. Ratings indicate the following level of performance:

   C = Consistently (90%-100%)
   U = Usually (75%-90%)
   O = Often (50%-75%)
   S = Sometimes (less than 50%)
   NY = Not Yet
   NA = Not Applicable
   NO = No Opportunity

4. Rating Periods: It is suggested that needs be assessed at least three times yearly, i.e. prior to training, mid-year to determine further training and at the end of the training program or school year to measure change.

5. The dates of rating, the rater's name and position should be entered. (Since the rating will take several days of observation, the date on which the rating is completed should be used.)

Determining Training Needs

1. Training needs are those behaviors which are least consistently shown.

2. To plan training for a group, it is suggested that scores for each item on the SIFT be tallied and plotted on the Needs Assessment Grid.

Example

Area IV. Interdisciplinary Staffing

SIFT ITEMS	NO	NA	NY	S	O	U	C
51.	0	0	3	1	1	5	7
52.	0	0	[1]	3	2	1	10
53.	0	0	(8)	2	3	2	2
54.	0	0	(7)	4	2	1	3

Individual Needs

Group Needs

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3. Clearly, based on the SIFT, items 53. and 54. would become group training since many staff members do not yet exhibit these behaviors. It is important that the grid be reviewed by staff so that training priorities can be jointly established. Together, supervisors and teachers may select priorities according to the teacher's own expressed needs, needs assessed using the SIFT, program priorities, and resources available. Such resources might include printed materials, films/filmstrips, formal study, workshops, or assistance from another staff member. In this way, the SIFT will allow you to plan each staff development activity with specific behavioral objectives in mind utilizing both expressed and assessed needs for training.

4. Assessing individual needs: It is suggested that individual training be determined using a similar process, i.e. for supervisor and teacher to review self ratings and peer or supervisor ratings reconciling both expressed and assessed needs.

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Position:_____

BEHAVIOR OR SKILL	FIRST PERIOD Date: Rater:		SECOND PERIOD Date: Rater:		THIRD PERIOD Date: Rater:	
AREA I. REFERRAL, INTAKE AND SCREENING	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
1. Records essential referral information.						
2. Acts on referrals by making appointment with family within appropriate time (specify:_____).						
3. Obtains and follows directions using road or transit maps.						
4. Makes appropriate introductions explaining to parents the source of and reason for the referral.						
5. Gives parent basic information about agency's program or services.						
6. Provides, when appropriate, additional information about program or services (e.g. funding, personnel qualifications, parent program.)						
7. Explains purpose of screening and obtains written permission to screen.						
8. Is able to administer and score appropriate screening instrument (s). (Specify:_____).						
9. Interprets screening results for parents using non-technical language.						

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AREA I. REFERRAL, INTAKE AND SCREENING (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
10. Obtains developmental and social history.						
11. Is accurate recorder of environment and behaviors (physical, parent and child behavior, family interaction, physical condition of parent and child).						
12. Explains planned disposition of referral on basis of screening results (e.g. no need for services, referral for admission, referral to other services).						
13. Obtains signed release of information from parent or guardian, to obtain relevant data.						
14. Offers information about other appropriate community services and assistance in obtaining them.						
15. Assures that parent is advised of admissions committee date, time, place, in writing one week in advance.						

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AREA II. DETERMINING CHILD PLACEMENT	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
16. Sends signed releases to obtain information regarding child's developmental and medical history.						
17. Obtains permission for assessments (developmental, medical, social, psychological).						
18. Obtains medical permission for P/T and O/T assessments.						
19. Collects and prepares relevant information for placement team.						
20. Summarizes placement data including developmental, medical, psychological and social histories with clarity, accuracy and objectivity.						
21. Participates in placement discussions and decisions as a representative of his/her specific discipline.						
22. Applies criteria for admission to cases presented.						
23. Encourages parent attendance and participation in placement process.						
24. Informs parents (not in attendance) and referral source(s) of placement recommendations and reasons for decisions.						

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AREA II. DETERMINING CHILD PLACEMENT (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
25. Makes referrals to other services as needed.						

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AREA III. INTERDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
26. Schedules child assessment with parents and staff.						
27. Secures assistance (e.g. transportation, babysitting) needed by families for participation in assessment.						
28. Ensures informed consent for assessment by providing parent with written information on due process and by obtaining written permission to test.						
29. Provides other staff members with information helpful to assessment process.						
30. Uses appropriate assessment instruments.						
31. Can give rationale for assessment instruments used.						
32. Controls, to the extent possible, variables affecting accurate assessment, e.g. sleeping, feeding, parental presence and environment.						
33. Observes child's spontaneous behavior with regard to assessment factors.						
34. Is able to carry out assessment procedure without unnecessarily disturbing the child.						

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AREA III. INTERDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
35. Is able to soothe and comfort child during assessment if necessary.						
36. Adapts assessment tasks when necessary to encourage optimal response.						
37. Records child behaviors accurately.						
38. Encourages parents' role in assessment process.						
39. Interprets assessment process or rewords specific items to obtain accurate parent reports of child behavior.						
40. Asks parents open-ended questions regarding child behavior to elicit information.						
41. Uses external sources of information to complete assessment.						

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AREA IV. INTERDISCIPLINARY STAFFING*	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
42. Introduces all participants at staffings in terms of position, role, etc.						
43. Can describe the roles of all team members including parents.						
44. Attempts to put parents and non-staff participants at ease in staffing situation.						
45. Elicits ideas, questions and concerns from all participants, including parents.						
46. Offers information and support to other staffing participants.						
47. Encourages parent to share additional information and asks questions during staffings.						
48. Can summarize and present medical, social and developmental histories.						
49. Describes child behavior noting antecendent and consequential events related to specific behaviors assessed.						
50. Shares assessment information in a way that can be understood by participants (clearly, without disciplinary jargon).						

*Staffing here is used to mean information sharing for purposes of planning or revising services. This may take place within one agency or in an interagency context.

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AREA IV. INTERDISCIPLINARY STAFFING (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
51. Is able to summarize and interpret assessment data to present profile of performance in all developmental areas noting strengths and weaknesses.						
52. Presents assessment data in appropriate written format within specified time.						

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BEHAVIOR OR SKILL	FIRST PERIOD Date: Rater:		SECOND PERIOD Date: Rater:		THIRD PERIOD Date: Rater:	
AREA V. PLANNING THE INDIVIDUALIZED DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
53. Secures parental participation in and approval of development of IDP.						
54. Uses staffing results and parental input to set long range goals and short term objectives.						
55. Interprets goals and objectives in relation to assessment of child's abilities or weaknesses for staff/parents.						
56. Selects and secures, independently or through referral, services necessary to meet goals.						
57. Is able to write instructional objectives in which outcome criteria are specified.						
58. Is able to write instructional sequences for short term objectives in a way that can be implemented by others (parents, staff).						
59. Is aware of and utilizes appropriate existing curricula in planning instructional strategies.						
60. Secures (offers) consultation from (to) other team members in implementing program.						
61. Supervises and/or utilizes resource persons effectively.						

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AREA V. PLANNING THE INDIVIEUALIZED DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
62. Selects or makes instructional materials appropriate to objectives.						

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AREA VI. DEVELOPING TEACHING SKILLS IN PARENTS (CARETAKERS)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
63. Accepts and can give rationale for home visiting as teaching context.						
64. Sets and implements schedule for regular parent contact.						
65. Encourages parental initiation of contact by providing office phone number.						
66. Informs parent as early as possible of schedule changes and reasons for changes.						
67. Secures commitments from parents for program implementation.						
68. Identifies for parents, specific areas of child's developmental strengths and weaknesses on an ongoing basis.						
69. Provides parents with written teaching activities for achieving short term objectives.						
70. Helps parents relate specific teaching activities to developmental goals and objectives.						
71. Varies approach according to individual parents' preferences, strengths, limitations.						

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AREA VI. DEVELOPING TEACHING SKILLS IN PARENTS (CARETAKERS) (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
72. Trains parents to be accurate observers/recorders of child behaviors.						
73. Provides parents with appropriate teaching materials, or...						
74. Makes parents aware of appropriate materials available in the home.						
75. Works with parents to adapt home environment to child's needs.						
76. Plans staff/parent contacts in advance (organizes or makes materials, plans instructional sequence in writing.)						
77. Adjusts plans to meet emergent parent needs (e.g. family crisis, illness).						
78. Selects parent teaching tasks appropriate to individual parent skill levels.						
79. Uses appropriate techniques such as models, prompts, assists, cues in teaching parent new teaching behavior.						
80. Allows parent opportunity to model new teaching activities with child.						

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AREA VI. DEVELOPING TEACHING SKILLS IN PARENTS (CARETAKERS) (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
81. Provides appropriate corrective feedback and reinforcement to parent practicing new teaching skill.						
82. Encourages parents to practice new behaviors in other settings.						
83. Observes and records changes in parent skills and adjusts program accordingly.						
84. Provides parents with suggestions for child/home management.						
85. Is supportive of parent in role of care giver, teacher, etc.						
86. Accepts cultural, speech, and life style differences.						
87. Adapts own language behaviors to the needs of individual children/parents.						
88. Observes and records environmental factors objectively.						
89. Gains information from parent on child progress to use in program planning.						

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AREA VI. DEVELOPING TEACHING SKILLS IN PARENTS (CARETAKERS) (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
90. Solicits parent involvement in selecting new goal behaviors and for teaching activities.						
91. Elicits written and verbal feedback from parents on program and services.						
92. Receives parents' questions or feedback and responds willingly.						

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AREA VII. INDIVIDUALIZATION OF INSTRUCTION	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
93. Implements service delivery plan agreed upon by staff/parent.						
94. Assists parent in structuring physical environment to meet child's needs.						
95. Plans lessons in advance in writing.						
96. Selects acitivities which will help reach objectives.						
97. Writes and follows instructional sequences (including objectives, materials, procedures) to meet specific objectives.						
98. Adapts home visit plans to meet emergent child needs (sleeping or sick child, etc.).						
99. Is able to establish attending behaviors before presenting task (varies facial expression, language, materials).						
100. Adapts teaching sequence to child's needs (preference for materials, rate of learning, etc.).						
101. Uses techniques of models, prompts, assists, cues to elicit response.						

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AREA VII. INDIVIDUALIZATION OF INSTRUCTION (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
102. Can determine appropriate reinforcers and implement individual reinforcement procedures.						
103. Pairs concrete reinforcers with praise.						
104. Reinforces successive approximations of target behaviors.						
105. Implements systematic procedures for decreasing inappropriate behaviors.						
106. Is able to give rationale for teaching procedures used.						
107. Is able to implement procedures suggested and modeled by other staff members.						
108. Selects or makes appropriate materials for specific instructional purposes.						
109. Is familiar with and able to use the child's adaptive equipment (hearing aids, braces, etc.).						

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AREA VIII. MANAGING CHILD PROGRESS DATA	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
110. Records child progress systematically.						
111. Uses child progress data to select new instructional objectives.						
112. Systematically provides and interprets child progress data to relevant staff members and parents.						
113. Maintains files to include necessary information (medical, developmental, social, psychological, releases, correspondence, assessment data, record of data sent to and received from other agencies.)						
114. Files reflect systematic and consistent child progress records and program plans.						
115. Updates/checks files at specified intervals.						

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AREA IX. CONSULTATIONS (Consultant may be other team member or external consultants)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
116. Recognizes need for and obtains consultation from other team members.						
117. Interprets role of consultant to parents.						
118. Obtains written releases for external consultation.						
119. Provides consultant with necessary information (developmental, medical, social history, assessment data) including expected outcome of consultation.						
120. Arranges for parent actess to consultant.						
121. Participates in parent/consultant dialogue as member of the interdisciplinary team.						
122. Allows opportunity for parental reaction to consultation.						
123. Responds appropriately to parent's emotional needs in consultant situation.						
124. Reads/provides written consultant reports. (See also item 60.)						

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AREA IX. CONSULTATIONS (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
125. Shares written consultation reports with parent and assists in interpretation.						

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AREA X. STAFF DEVELOPMENT	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
126. Assesses own behavior in terms of child progress, parent and staff feedback, and evaluation instruments.						
127. Elicits and accepts performance feedback and suggestions for performance improvement.						
128. Is able to change behavior based on feedback.						
129. Recognizes and expresses own need for skills, information or performance improvement.						
130. Seeks professional development through conferences, workshops, staff meetings or individual study or reading.						
131. Shares ideas/experiences with other staff members.						

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AREA XI. GENERIC SKILLS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
132. Understands and meets basic requirements of job description and contract.						
133. Is able to describe, accurately, agency goals, funding sources, services and personnel.						
134. Can describe the etiology and behavioral characteristics of the handicaps of children in caseload.						
135. Sets priorities consistent with program priorities and uses time accordingly.						
136. Plans work to meet established timelines.						
137. Follows established procedures for providing weekly and/or daily schedule (where can be reached, when, phone number, etc.)						
138. Respects and protects confidentiality of job-related information.						
139. Understands and complies with State and Federal laws dealing with legal rights of clients (e.g. PL 94-142, 504, etc.)						
140. Exhibits rapport with parents/staff.						

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O = Occasionally (50-74%)
S = Sometimes (less than 50%)
NY = Not Yet
NA = Not Applicable
NO = No Opportunity

Name:_____

Position:_____

BEHAVIOR OR SKILL	FIRST PERIOD Date: Rater:		SECOND PERIOD Date: Rater:		THIRD PERIOD Date: Rater:	
AREA XI. GENERIC SKILLS (Continued)	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
141. Communicates readily with parents/staff/other agencies.						
142. Anticipates problems to prevent disruption of program activities.						
143. Anticipates consequences of decisions and makes decisions which result in smoot consequences.						
144. Participates in group discussion/decision making.						
145. Offers assistance to and shares ideas with other staff members.						
146. Utilizes agencies material resources (toys, books, journals, etc.) following established procedures for borrowing, returning (e.g. does not hoard in trunk of car; returns in good condition, teeth marks removed, peanut butter washed off!)						
147. Displays enthusiam for work (does handsprings regularly).						
148. Exhibits interest in work of others within the agency.						

SKILLS INVENTORY FOR TEACHERS (SIFT)

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Name: _____

Position: _____

BEHAVIOR OR SKILL	FIRST PERIOD Date: Rater:		SECOND PERIOD Date: Rater:		THIRD PERIOD Date: Rater:	
AREA VI. GENERIC SKILLS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS	Rating	COMMENTS
149. Provides suggestions about improvement and innovation in program development.						
150. Makes terrific brownies and cheesecake.						